

Supports for WorkFirst Families

December 2006

- *The number of families on welfare in Washington has dropped 43 percent -- from nearly 91,000 in 1997 to about 51,400 in October 2006.*
- *Caseload has stayed stable through the recession of the last two years.*
- *More than 169,900 parents have left welfare and stayed off since WorkFirst began. In 2004 alone, more than 10,000 parents left welfare for work.*
- *Last year, more than \$324 million in child support was collected for current or former WorkFirst parents.*

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For more information about the WorkFirst program, visit www.workfirst.wa.gov

WorkFirst is Washington State's welfare reform program that helps financially struggling families find jobs, keep their jobs, get better jobs and build a better life for their children.

What financial and medical supports are available to WorkFirst families while they are on welfare?

In addition to the services that WorkFirst provides to help parents prepare for and obtain work, they may also get the following.

- **Working Connections Child Care:** Subsidies pay for child care needed to work or participate in WorkFirst activities.
- **Medicaid** provides medical coverage for WorkFirst families, disabled adults and seniors, and children in low-income families.
- **Basic Food:** Help paying for food is based on family size, income, and expenses.
- **Child Support:** Help with establishing paternity and collecting child support and medical support from the non-custodial parent.
- **Emergency cash assistance:** Immediate help to prevent eviction and utility shut-off or to secure housing.
- **Support services:** Help paying for expenses related to work, such as transportation or clothing.
- **Education and Training:** Basic Skills and ESL along with some specialized short-term training opportunities are available at no cost to the student at state community and technical colleges.
- **Tuition assistance** is available to cover costs such as tuition, books and fees for other training programs once a parent is working at least half time.

As wages increase, these supports gradually drop away, until parents can support their families without further help. WorkFirst ensures parents are aware of these services so they can work toward creating a better life for themselves and their children.